

The Wintersburg Japanese Presbyterian Church

The first few Japanese settlers began arriving in Orange County in the early 1890s, but it was not until after 1900 that the local population began to grow. Many of the Japanese found work in the celery and sugar beet fields in the area between Huntington Beach and Westminster,

As the local Japanese population increased, schools, churches, and community organizations began to form. One of the first was the Wintersburg Japanese Presbyterian Church, which began as a mission of the Westminster Presbyterian Church in 1904. Rev. Hisakichi Terasawa was the first pastor.

In 1909, the congregation began construction of a small wooden church at what is now the southeast corner of Warner Avenue and Nichols Street. It was dedicated on May 8, 1910. At the time, Rev. J.J. Nakamura explained, "Our mission field includes Wintersburg, Bolsa Beach, Smeltzer, Bolsa, Garden Grove, Old Newport, Talbert and Huntington Beach. There are living in this field about three hundred Japanese and in the busy [agricultural] season three or four hundred more."

In 1930, the mission became a separate church under Rev. Kenji Kikuchi. In 1934, the completed a new, larger sanctuary at 7622 Warner Avenue. It served the congregation until 1965, when they moved to Fairview Avenue in Santa Ana. The congregation, now known as the Wintersburg Presbyterian Church, is still active to this day.